

# Cultural competency

Training for health care providers

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# What is cultural competency?

Cultural competency is a set of congruent behaviors, attitudes and policies that enables effective work in cross-cultural situations.

# What is cultural awareness?

The ability to recognize the cultural factors, norms, values, communication patterns/types, socio-economic status and world views that can shape personal and professional behavior

# Importance of cultural differences in health care settings

Cultural factors may influence the way individuals:

- Define and evaluate situations
- Seek help for problems
- Present their problems, situations and information to others
- Respond to interventions and service plans

Your level of cultural awareness helps you modify your behaviors to respond to the needs of others while maintaining a professional level of respect, objectivity and identity.

# Cultural competency skills

Listens to others in an unbiased manner, respects the points of view of others and promotes the expression of diverse opinions and perspectives

Uses appropriate methods for interacting sensitively, effectively and professionally with persons of all ages and lifestyle preferences from diverse cultural, socioeconomic, educational, racial, ethnic and professional backgrounds

Recognizes the importance of the role of cultural, social and behavioral factors in determining the delivery methods for public health services

Takes into account cultural differences when developing and adapting approaches to problems

Understands the dynamic forces contributing to cultural diversity

Understands the importance of a diverse public health workforce

# Our cultural competency philosophy

Create and maintain a culturally competent network that acknowledges and incorporates the following at all levels:

- Value of diversity
- Vigilance about understanding the dynamics resulting from cultural differences
- Continuous expansion of cultural knowledge
- Consistent adaptation of services to meet culturally unique needs
- Provider Liaison available to help with cultural and linguistic needs

# Amerigroup Kansas, Inc. is committed to cultural competency

- We have adopted all 15 National Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) in health care to ensure all members who enter the health care system receive equal, quality and effective treatment. Review the CLAS standards at <https://www.thinkculturalhealth.hhs.gov/content/clas.asp>.
- We actively recognize and understand the roles age, culture, ability, socioeconomic status and ethnicity play in the lives of our members to ensure equal and effective access to health care, support systems and community services.
- We recruit and contract with providers who reflect and appreciate the socioeconomic and cultural differences, primary languages spoken, functional abilities, and complex health care and service needs of our members.
- We educate providers to ensure they promote and use interpreter services for members.

As our contracted health care provider, our expectation is for you and your staff to gain and continually increase knowledge of, skill with, improved attitudes about and sensitivities to diverse cultures. This results in effective care and services for all people by taking into account each person's values, reality conditions and linguistic needs.





# Reasons to increase your cultural competency awareness

- The perception of illnesses, diseases and their causes varies by culture
- The belief systems related to health, healing and wellness are as diverse as the populations we serve
- Culture and socioeconomic concerns influence help-seeking behaviors and attitudes toward health care providers and services
- Individual preferences affect traditional and nontraditional approaches to health care
- Health care providers from culturally and linguistically diverse groups are underrepresented in the current delivery system

# You have a profound, positive impact on the quality of interactions with your patients by:

1. Acknowledging their varied behaviors, beliefs and values
2. Incorporating those variables into their assessments, interactions and treatments

Patients' abilities to communicate symptoms and adhere to recommended treatments will improve in direct relation to your level of cultural competency and awareness

# What's in it for providers?

When patients increase understanding of symptoms and compliance with treatment plans and follow-up activities, providers may also experience increased:

- Job satisfaction from seeing better quality of life and health for patients
- Efficiency in practice operations and appointment availability resulting from fewer repeat calls or visits from patients for the same problems or symptoms
- Potential for higher quality scores
- Potential for financial rewards from managed care organizations' quality incentive programs

# Assess and strengthen your cultural competency

Review the Cultural and Linguistic Competency Self Assessment Checklist located at

[nccc.georgetown.edu/resources/assessments.html](http://nccc.georgetown.edu/resources/assessments.html)



from the Georgetown University Center for Child and Human Development.

# The Cultural Competence Health Practitioner Assessment:

- Was developed by the National Center for Cultural Competence at the request of the Bureau of Primary Health Care, Health Resources and Services Administration, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
- Is intended to enhance delivery of high quality services to culturally and linguistically diverse individuals and underserved communities
- Promotes cultural and linguistic competence as an essential approach for practitioners to eliminate health disparities among racial and ethnic groups

# CCHPA results

According to the National Center for Cultural Competence at Georgetown University Center for Child and Human Development, there are numerous benefits to self-assessment:

- Values and belief systems
- Cultural aspects of epidemiology
- Clinical decision-making
- Life-cycle events
- Cross-cultural communication
- Empowerment/health management

Depending on your response pattern, results are provided with a list of resources like web-based journals, textbooks, multimedia materials and suggested learning experiences intended to support your growth in these areas.

# Examples of best practices from our providers

- Guadalupe Medical Center in Las Vegas, Nevada holds weekly diabetic education classes targeted to the Hispanic population — the most at-risk for diabetes.
- Nevada Health Centers, a Federally Qualified Health Center, developed their own cultural competency program to address the needs of Hispanic patients with asthma. Within the Hispanic culture, asthma can be viewed as embarrassing or disgraceful, so the care and information this facility provides doesn't use the term 'asthma' to ensure sensitivity and comfort levels with treatment.

# Examples of best practices from our providers (cont.)

**Dipika S. Ambani, M.D.**

**Fellow of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists**

Houston, Texas

“Asian women generally feel more comfortable with female care providers. Sensitivity and care should be taken in situations that may cause patients embarrassment. Patients may expect doctors to have all the answers and make all the decisions. They may have numerous questions about their care, procedures, activities and diet. They get comfort when these (questions) are answered extensively. Understanding their cultural background, addressing their fears, involving them in (their) care with plenty of education helps to build patient confidence and enables us to take better care of them.”



# Examples of best practices from our providers (cont.)

Denise Esper, chief operating officer, and Tamarah Duperval-Brownlee, Chief Medical Officer,

**Lone Star Circle of Care, a *Federally Qualified Health Center in Austin, Texas***

To serve a 2011 patient population of 45.6 percent of Hispanics and 10.5 percent of African-Americans, this center:

1. Ensured front-line staff reflected these demographics and language competencies
2. Prioritized providers with high levels of social, cultural and behavioral-factor knowledge underserved populations (e.g., providers who are members of underrepresented groups or demonstrated experience with diverse health environments)

# Examples of best practices from our providers (cont.)

4. Ensured patient-centered, culturally appropriate images, educational materials and interventions were tailored and available to these populations.
5. Participated in community health events and media targeting minority populations, and partnered with health advocate groups like the Latino Health Forum
6. Held a refugee clinic to offer translation and patient-centered health home services to newly arrived immigrants from nearly a dozen countries, including longer appointment times to accommodate translator-patient-provider exchanges (of which patients were not accustomed) and after-hours availability to accommodate nontraditional work schedules and child care concerns

# Want to learn more?

U.S. Department of Health & Human Services  
Office of Minority Health

**THINK CULTURAL HEALTH**  
*Advancing Health Equity at Every Point of Contact*

Home | About TCH | CLAS & the CLAS Standards | Continuing Education | C

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The goal of Think Cultural Health is to *Advance Health Equity at Every Point of Contact* through the development and promotion of culturally and linguistically appropriate services. Our continuing education programs are designed to help individuals at all levels and in all disciplines promote health and health equity.

**A Physician's Practical Guide to Culturally Competent Care**

- A free, online educational program accredited for physicians, physician assistants, and nurse practitioners.
- To learn more about the development process, please visit the [Document Archive](#).
- [Visit the program](#) to learn more and to register.

Obtain no-cost continuing medical education credits through further study of cultural competency topics at <https://www.thinkculturalhealth.hhs.gov/Content/ContinuingEd.asp>

# Want to learn more? (cont.)

Click here if you want to learn more about the Cultural Competency Organizational Self Assessment:

[nccc.georgetown.edu/resources/assessments.html](http://nccc.georgetown.edu/resources/assessments.html)



from the Georgetown University Center for Child and Human Development.